

Description of a new species of the genus *Haustellum* Schumacher, 1817 (Gastropoda: Muricidae) from the Western Indian Ocean.

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ABSTRACT: An undescribed species belonging to the genus *Haustellum* has been found in deep water off the most northeastern point of Africa; a comparison is made with the closest species included in the "group" of *Haustellum* s.s.

INTRODUCTION.

The genus *Haustellum* shows a close relationship with *Murex* s.s. Linné, 1758, and in the PONDER & VOKES (1988) revision of the Indo-West Pacific species of the two genera, the authors ascribed to *Haustellum* certain species previously included by other taxonomists (e.g. RADWIN & D' ATTILIO, 1976; FAIR, 1976) in the genus *Murex* s.s.

The main difference between the two taxa has been found in the reproductive system : the species of *Haustellum* show a non-muscular ejaculatory duct, whereas the species of *Murex* have a muscular one (PONDER & VOKES, 1988:10, 17).

As well the shell body presents some differences, the lack of labral tooth and the spineless (or almost spineless) varices are typical for the genus *Haustellum* (PONDER & VOKES, 1988 : 7, 14, 17). Nevertheless, *Haustellum* sensu Ponder & Vokes can be easily divided, according to several shell characters, in two distinctive groups: a first one including low spired species with globose and spineless body whorl, very developed inductura, long and smooth, or nearly so, siphonal canal, and a second group including the species moved by PONDER & VOKES (1988) from *Murex* s.s. to *Haustellum*. HOUART (1990 : 331), making this division, denominates the first group *Haustellum* s.s. and the second *Haustellum* s.l.; it would be

appropriate, if confirmed by further studies, to give them an official taxonomic status.

Haustellum franchii n. sp.

Description

Shell moderate in size for the genus, club-shaped, low-spired, protoconch paucispiral of one and one half to two smooth, bulbous whorls, terminating in a straight, marked varix and followed by six convex, rounded postnuclear whorls. Suture impressed and weakly undulate, three rather strong, rounded varices per whorl, noticeable from third teleoconch whorl onwards, excavated behind, spineless on body whorl, with a small spine-like tubercle on shoulder of spire whorls. Four or five axial costae in each intervarical space, weak axial ribs discontinuously distributed between them; four spiral cords per whorl on first two teleoconch whorls, afterwards minor cordlets appearing, alternating with principal ones, for a total of 26/30 on body whorl; spiral continuing on higher half of siphonal canal. Primary cords, crossing axial costae, generate prominent and rounded tubercles, stronger on shoulder edge. Aperture obliquely ovate, anal notch broadly open and shallow, labrum protruding, sharply edged and weakly crenulate, with a small hollow prickle at posterior end just following apertural varix. Inner side of outer lip with 13-15 lirations,

columellar lip adherent posteriorly and detached anteriorly, forming an highly developed inductura, outside sculptured with swollen ribs, smooth inside. Siphonal canal straight, moderately long, just less than half of total shell length, narrowly open and communicating with stomatic aperture trough a sinuous slit, one small spine present near base of body whorl, surface nodose.

Ground colour cream with dark brown and reddish-brown spiral lines, from fourth teleoconch whorl onwards, and topping primary cords; first line on shoulder edge, a second one, noticeable on penultimate whorl, just over suture; on body whorl : one on shoulder edge, two adjacent just under midbody line and one on basal zone; pattern continuing on spiral sculpture of siphonal canal. Aperture whitish, inner lip edge inside reddish coloured; brownish bands on siphonal canal regularly distributed.

Comparison

H. franchii falls under the *Haustellum* s.s. group; few species and subspecies belonging to this group are present in the western side of the Indian ocean, namely : *H. haustellum haustellum* (Linné., 1758) with a wide Indo-Pacific distribution, *H. haustellum longicaudum* (Baker, 1891) probably limited to the Horn of Africa area, including southern part of the Red Sea, *H. fallax* (Smith, 1901) from Natal to Mozambique.

The new species differs from the first two above mentioned because of its lower spire, more rounded whorls profile, lighter colouration lacking blotches; *H. fallax* has a similar low spired shells, but with a more angled shoulder, heavier and broader varices and axial ribs, darker ground colour and different pattern, moreover the spine on the

siphonal canal, sometime present also in *H. haustellum*, is much more developed and in more anterior position than *H. franchii* one. Two other taxa included in the *Haustellum* s.s. group : *H. kurodai* (Shikama, 1964) and *H. vicdani* Kosuge, 1980, from Japan and the Philippines, have been synonymized by PONDER & VOKES (1988) with *H. haustellum*.

A rare species from south west Australia, *H. wilsoni* D'Attilio & Old, 1971 has a certain likeness in shape with the new species, but differs in its pustulose sculpture, more rounded shoulder, deep channelled suture and ground colours.

HOUART (1990 : 333, figs. 14-16, 32) mentions a probably undescribed species of *Haustellum* found in Tanzania and Madagascar waters, but it has very different features (in shape, colour and sculpture) from *H. franchii*. *H. hirasei* (Hirase, 1915) has an almost identical colouration and pattern, but this taxon belongs to *Haustellum* s.l. group.

Type Locality

Trawled by shrimp boats at 200-250m depth off Ras Hafun, northeastern Somalia.

Type Material

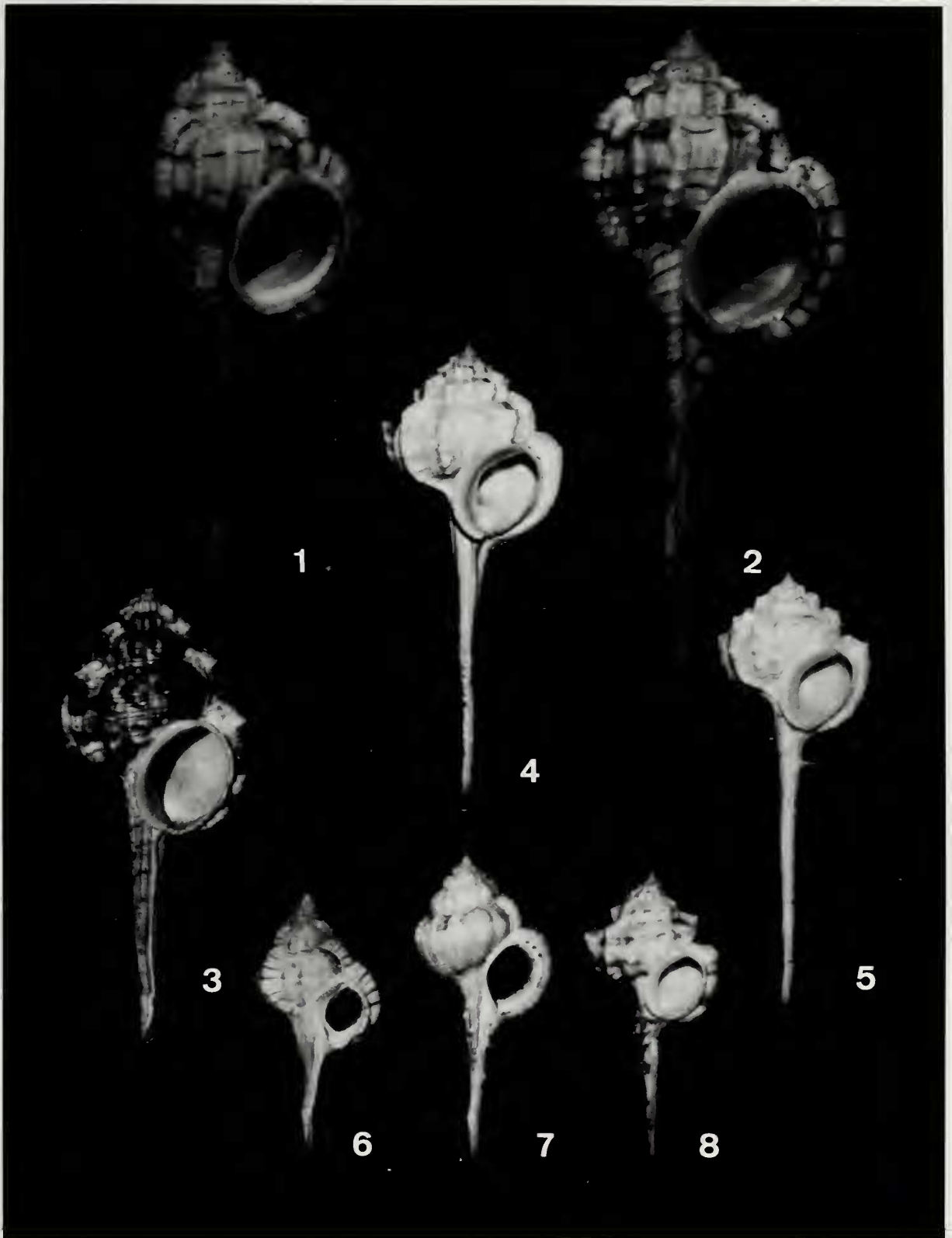
Three specimens studied : holotype, 59.80mm, IRSBN, Bruxelles, no. 27962/459; paratype 1, 66.85mm, F.Franchi Col., Piacenza; paratype 2, 30.30mm, R. Houart Col., Ezemaal.

Etymology

I dedicate this species to Dr. Fabrizio Franchi from Piacenza, a keen conchologist and a great friend.

Figures 1-8 (opposite)

1. *H. franchii*, holotype, 59.8mm. 2. *H. franchii*, paratype 1, 66.85mm. 3. *H. haustellum haustellum*, 120mm, Mactan Isl., Philippines; 4. *H. vicdani*, 130mm, Bohol Isl., Philippines; 5. *H. kurodai*, 120mm, Siasi Isl., Sulu Sea, Philippines; 6. *H. hirasei*, 63mm, Tosa Bay, Japan; 7. *H. wilsoni*, 72.5mm, Freemantle, W. Australia; 8. *H. fallax*, 79.5mm, off Durban, S. Africa.



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